

Yesterday, I was invited to speak at the North Chicago Chamber of Commerce's "Forecast North Chicago" luncheon along with Mayor Leon Rockingham and Captain David Schnell of Naval Station Great Lakes. North Chicago is the second poorest community in Illinois and for many years development has been scarce. However, by steadily working to bring private investment to the city as well as building on the partnerships with the Navy and VA, we're turning the community's economy around in a big way.

Much of that credit goes to Mayor Rockingham. Since taking office, he's been the "ribbon-cutting mayor," due to all the new economic initiatives he has spearheaded and completed for the community.

I've had the pleasure to work closely with Mayor Rockingham on numerous economic development projects. Together, we've increasing federal Impact Aid funding to \$10.8 million for North Chicago schools, saved and expanded our VA hospital and opened Gate 4, a crucial component of the Sheridan Crossing business district. I also am proud that we've secured an additional \$245,000 federal grant for Sheridan Crossing to help speed its progress.

North Chicago will soon celebrate its 100th anniversary. I'm sure everyone in the room yesterday would agree that we have much to celebrate when the time comes. Together, we're working on creating a stronger future for North Chicago.



Marino Chamber with Abbott Labs presents Congressman Kirk with the Chamber's "Guardian of Business Security"



Congressman Kirk discusses his efforts to boost the North Chicago economy



Congressman Kirk and North Chicago Mayor Leon Rockingham

